

COLGATE & COMPANY JERSEY CITY PLANT: G BLOCK  
(Colgate-Palmolive Company Jersey City Plant: G Block)  
81-95 Greene Street  
Jersey City  
Hudson County  
New Jersey

HAER No. NJ-71-NN

HAER  
NJ  
9-JERC1,  
18NN-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
Northeast Field Area  
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200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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- Location:** 81-95 Greene Street, Jersey City, Hudson County, New Jersey
- Significance:** G Block served as the principal manufacturing facility for all personal care products other than bar soap at the Colgate Jersey City plant from 1915 to 1987. Although not an individually significant structure, G Block was significant as a component of the Colgate plant.
- Description:** G Block consists of six structures (G-1, G-2, G-1 Ext., G-2 Ext., G-3 and G-4), all designed to appear and function together as one reinforced concrete, eight-story-plus-basement, classicized structure. The long leg of the composite "L"-shaped plan faces Grand Street; the short ends face Greene and York Streets. G-1 and G-2, which together face Greene Street, each occupy a 99-by-101 foot lot. The 48-by-101- and 48-by-66-foot G-1 and G-2 extensions are, respectively, immediately behind (west) of G-1 and G-2. G-3, immediately north of G-2 Ext. and west of G-2, is 38 by 35 feet; G-4, immediately west of G-1 Ext., is 76 by 101 feet. Cylindrical interior columns and exterior-wall piers define structural and facade bays which in G-1, G-2, and G-4 are typically 20 feet east-west and 17 feet north-south. Smaller typical bays in G-1 Ext., G-2 Ext., and G-3 are 17 feet square, but with some irregular interior bays to accommodate partitioned areas and corridors to shipping doors (Figures 1 and 2).

The York Street (north) side of G Block has an eight-bay, cement-stuccoed facade with a tri-partite horizontal division of spaces into base, body, and attic (basement and first, second through seventh, and eighth floors, respectively). Vertical division is achieved by the use of piers which are rusticated at the base level. With minor variations, this facade is typical of most others on G Block.

The basement level contains an eight-pane steel sash and a wooden pedestrian door in the easternmost bay. A mesh cage encloses an exterior stairway, with an entrance on Greene Street, on all floors of this bay. The second through fourth basement bays from the east contain large, pivoted steel sash windows behind mesh-infilled iron bars, with the windows separated by concrete tanks with an exterior 45-degree-angle cement

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\* Capitalized references are to photographs included with this documentation, or with documentation for HAER No. NJ-71 and associated structures.

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wall. The fifth basement bay from the east is an entrance of two metal doors, flanked by obscure glass block panels surmounted by an aluminum truck canopy above which is more obscure glass block. The remaining basement bays (G-3) are rectangular concrete panels with an incised border. The first floor has a sixteen-pane steel window and pedestrian door in the easternmost bay, and large 4-by-13 windows with louvers in the remaining bays, except above the fifth-bay door where there is glass block infill. The easternmost bay treatment is repeated through all eight stories of the facade (see HAER No. NJ-71, C BLOCK TO SOUTHWEST; B-1 AT LEFT).

Counting from the east, an entablature above the fifth through eighth bays, and above the pier between the first and second bays, delineates the base from the body of the York Street facade. The moulding of the entablature includes a fillet, ovolo and small frieze for the architrave, a larger protruding blank frieze, and a cyma recta and fillet for the cornice. Between the two entablature sections, a panel framed by a relief border and with COLGATE & COMPANY in relief letters extends above the second through fourth bays. The third through seventh floors of the facade consist of large horizontal expanses of original window sash or obscure glass block with hoppers, except for the easternmost bay noted above and the fifth and eighth bays which are paired windows (see HAER No. NJ-71, G BLOCK TO SOUTHWEST; B-1 AT LEFT).

The seventh and eighth floors are separated by another entablature, of the same design as the one between the base and the body of the building. The eighth floor windows have three separate window sections--a wider middle window flanked by two narrower windows--except for the easternmost bay's single window and door, and the three westernmost bays (G-3) where the triple windows are the same size. All piers at the eighth floor level are rusticated including the narrow piers between the windows. Above the windows is the same entablature used below, except for the addition of a dentil course immediately below the entablature (see HAER No. NJ-71, G BLOCK TO SOUTHWEST; B-1 AT LEFT).

The eastern, Greene Street facade of C Block is twelve bays wide, with the same design elements as the York Street facade. The end bays have paired windows, and the remaining bays are single horizontal expanses of obscure glass block with hoppers for ventilation. The first floor is at a higher elevation than the sloped York Street side, providing for a higher basement and fronted by an extended ramp railroad siding and four loading bays. The basement openings are visible behind the railroad siding. The loading bays (two, five, eight, and eleven from the south) have corrugated metal doors and cantilevered

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concrete canopies. Below each canopy is a trio of small windows. The first floor entablature continues over the loading bay canopies. The eighth floor consists of groups of paired windows only. A pedestrian bridge connected G Block to B-14 (HAER No. NJ-71-N) at the third floor, fifth bay from the south, until 1989. The bridge was a steel-framed, concrete structure with four windows, decorated with details in relief including pier strips, a sill belt course and starburst panels below each window. There was a small entablature and parapet over the bridge. The bridge also included a conveyor from B Block to a nearby conveyor bridge leaving the third floor of G Block's Greene Street facade through the second bay from the south. The steel-framed, metal- or transite-sided conveyor bridge passed over Greene Street and along the north side of G Block. There is a single pedestrian door in the Greene Street facade, in the first floor southernmost bay (Figure 1; (see HAER No. NJ-71, G BLOCK TO SOUTHWEST; B-1 AT LEFT).

The Grand Street facade is identical in detail to the remaining building. The base lacks a basement, and the ground floor contains fifteen truck bays in the twelve-bay facade. The first-floor end bays contain paired pedestrian doors flanked by infill panels and transoms of glass. The building conforms to the eastward dipping street line. West of the facade corresponding to G-1 Ext., the four bays of the G-4 facade repeat the pattern seen on G-1, including the eighth-floor windows (VIEW NORTH OF GRAND STREET FACADE).

The unornamented west facades of G Blocks, adjacent to smaller residential and commercial properties, have paired windows in bays which are higher than abutting structures. The flat composition roof is punctuated by elevator and stairwell concrete penthouses with hipped skylights, two riveted-steel water towers over G-2 and G-4, and several hoppers for material once processed in the building.

The interior of the block consists mostly of open floor plans with a few small office enclosures, and finishes of painted concrete surfaces. Former exterior windows on the west sides of G-1 and G-2 survive as painted interior partitions. Most manufacturing equipment was removed by 1988 (FOURTH FLOOR VIEW TO NORTHEAST...; SIXTH FLOOR VIEW TO WEST...).

**History:**

Turner Construction Company built G Block for Colgate in several stages between 1915-1936, to specifications of Colgate engineers Warren Davey and Jay Jacobs. Timmins and Chapman served as architects for G-1 and G-2, completed 1916. G-3 and G-4 were added by 1920, including the southernmost two bays of what was later designated G-1 Ext., leaving an open area within G Block until the completion of the G-1 and G-2 extensions in

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1936 (originally planned as G-5). A large illuminated FAB sign rested on the roof in the 1920s. Aside from the addition of canopies and adjustable loading docks in the early 1950s, and of automatic pallet lifts c1971, there were few documented structural changes made to G Block. Some overhanging cornice elements were partially removed in 1946 (Associated Mutual Insurance Company 1922; American Architect 1917; see drawings cited below).

Colgate & Co. began this concrete factory block to house the Perfumery Department, which had quickly outgrown its quarters in B-7/B-8 (HAER No. NJ-71-J). Until c1922, G Block was used for manufacture, packing, and storage of talc and dental powder, dental cream, and cold cream, with parts of the eighth floor serving as a clinic, lounge, and women's cafeteria. To accommodate increased soap production, G-4 was built for the dental cream facilities and some soap finishing operations were moved to the third floor of G-1 and G-2. After the consolidation of the Colgate and Palmolive toilet article departments c1929-30, G Block was exclusively for toilet article manufacture, for the storage and mixing of essential oils until the 1977 construction of J-1 (HAER No. NJ-71-00), and a cafeteria for both sexes until c1955. Other facilities included lockers, a machine shop for G Block equipment maintenance, and storage areas for packing and raw materials. Toilet articles made after c1930 included dental creams and powders, hair care products, talc and face powder, deodorants, and shaving cream. Manufacture and handling operations became increasingly mechanized beginning c1920, with automation of liquids metering added in the late 1960s (Bell 1931, Krantz 1931; personal communication, Charles Manson).

Except for some conveyors, most equipment was removed in 1988 and the ground floor was devoted to storage of Colgate equipment designated for transfer to other company factories. With the demolition of B and C blocks in 1988-89, the two bridges off the Green Street facade of G Block were removed.

Sources:

Plans and Drawings

Colgate-Palmolive Company currently retains nearly 300 drawings on G Block, most of which pertain to equipment; those listed below cover structural, architectural, and floor layout data. For future access, contact the company's Office of Corporate Communications, 300 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

Davey, Warren, Engineer and Turner Construction Company  
1915 Colgate & Company Factory. [23 drawings, with prefix number 459]:

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Grand Street Elevation.          | 23. Sidewalk Plan.                    |
| 3. Rear Elevation.                  | 24. Bridge.                           |
| 5. Footing Plan.                    | 24a. Bridge Details.                  |
| 7a. First Floor and Roof of Shed    | 26. Cornice Details.                  |
| 7b. First Floor and Roof of Shed.   | 26a. Cornice Details.                 |
| Tin Tube Drawing.                   | 27. Lettering - York Street.          |
| 7c. First Floor Tin Tubes.          | 28. Detail of Toilets.                |
| 8a. Second Floor Tin Tubes.         | 29. Metal Covered Entrance Details.   |
| 9. Third through Sixth Floor Plan.  | 30. Grand & Greene Street Penthouses. |
| 12. Column Schedule.                | 31. York Street & Rear Stair          |
| 13-16. Column Details. [4 drawings] | Penthouses                            |

Davey, Warren, Engineer

1918-19 Colgate & Company Factory, G-4. [6 drawings]:

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| E1. Grand Street Elevation.                                       | E4. Basement Floor Plan. |
| E2. York Street Elevation.  | E5. First Floor Plan.    |
| E3. Plot Plan Showing Fire Exits,<br>Colgate & Company Extension. | E6. Typical Floor Plan.  |

Davey, Warren, Engineer and Turner Construction Company

1919-20 Colgate & Company Factory, C-4. [6 drawings, with prefix 724]:

- 1-4. Elevations, Colgate & Company Extension [4 drawings].
- 117. Tin Tube Plans.
- 101. South (Grand Street) Elevation.

Jacobs, Jay A., Plant Engineer and Turner Construction Company

1935-36 Proposed New Building C-5. (Renamed Extension G-1 and G-2  
June 20, 1941). [16 drawings, with prefix 1463]:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Existing Footings Adjacent<br>to New Building. | 54. Roof Plan, Structural.                      |
| 2. Basement Plan.                                 | 56. West Elevation.                             |
| 3. Typical Floor - Architectural.                 | S1-S7. [7 structural drawings].                 |
| 4. Longitudinal Section.                          | H12. Detail of Women's Toilet, 5th<br>Floor     |
| 5. Cross Section.                                 | E1. Basement and 8 Floors Electrical<br>Wiring. |

H.C. Vogel Company [New York, N.Y.]

1936 Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Company, Building C-5.

3633 1-3. Set of 3 shop drawings for sprinklers.

Truscon Steel Products [Youngstown, OH]

1936 Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Company Building. Drawing No. T-58.

Lafayette Iron Works [Jersey City, NJ].

1951 C-Block Canopy Details. Set of shop drawings numbered C1459  
1 through 6.

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Colgate-Palmolive Company, Plant Engineering Division.

- 1953        New Adjustable Loading Docks for Doors 1 & 2, C-1-1.  
            Drawing No. 2-3504.
- 1954        Sewer Survey - G-Block. No drawing number.
- 1953-54     Equipment Layout - C-Block. [10 drawings]:
- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1-096-1. Basement.  | 1-091-5. 5th Floor. |
| 1-095-2. 1st Floor. | 1-090-5. 6th Floor. |
| 1-094-2. 2nd Floor. | 1-089-2. 7th Floor. |
| 1-093-3. 3rd Floor. | 1-088-3. 8th Floor. |
| 1-092-3. 4th Floor. | 1-087-1. Roof Plan. |
- 1955        Composite Elevations of G-Block. Drawing No. 2-3899.
- 1971        Automatic Pallet Lift. Drawing No. 2-10109. March 1971.

Interview:

Charles Manson, Colgate-Palmolive Company Manager of Contract Manufactures, U.S., and a former quality control foreman in G Block, provided some information on post-1955 operations.

Bibliography:

American Architect. The

- 1917        [photograph and note] February 21, 1917, Vol. 111, p. 117.

Associated Mutual Insurance Company

- 1922        Colgate & Co. (Soap and Toilet Supplies). Surveyed November 8, 1922.

Ball, E.A.

- 1931        Lunch Room Progress - Jersey City. The Pulse III, 8: 13-14.

Krantz, K.T.

- 1931        The Jersey City Toilet Article Department. The Pulse III, 6: 20-22, 32.

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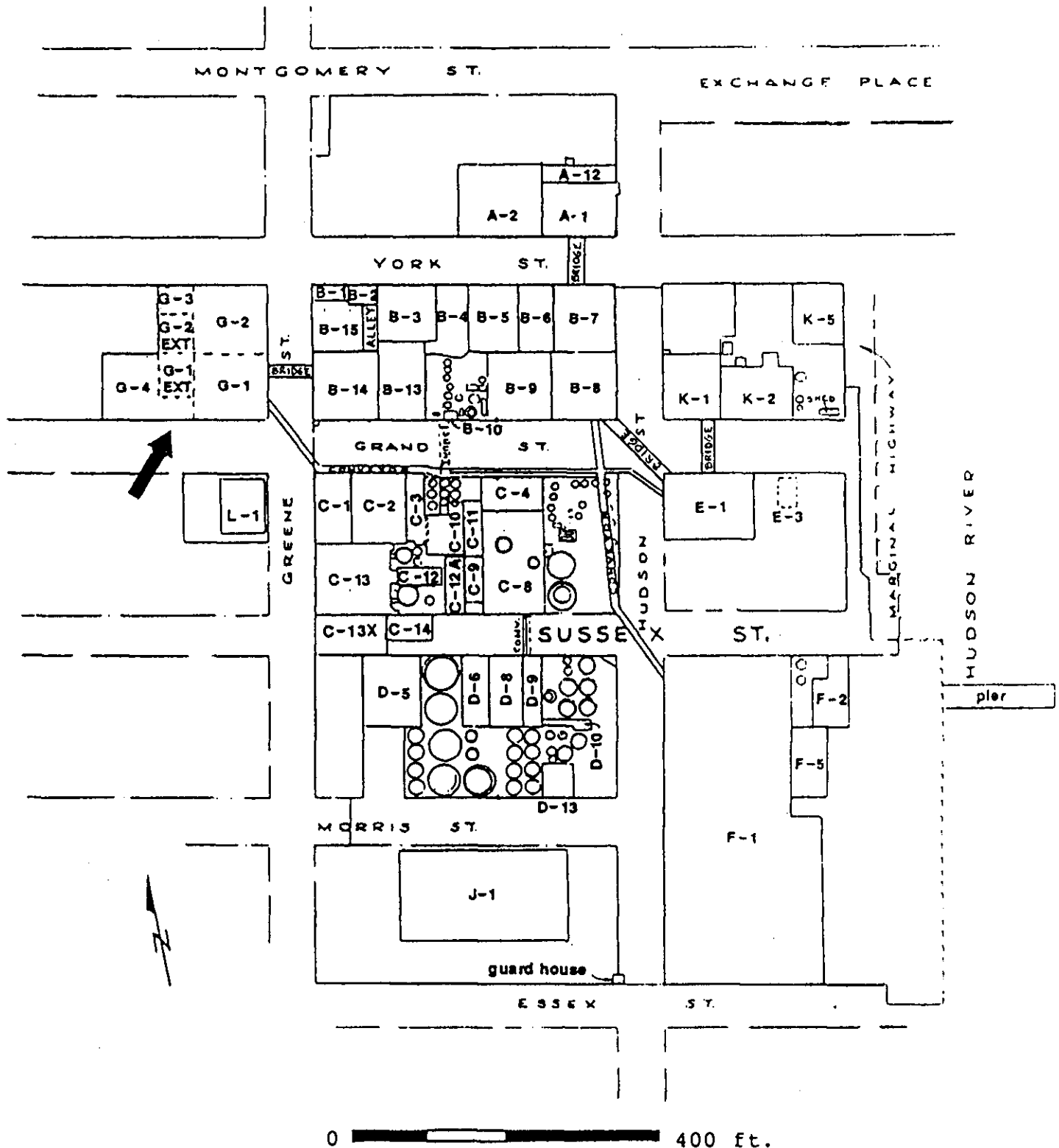


Figure 1. LOCATION OF G BLOCK AT JERSEY CITY PLANT



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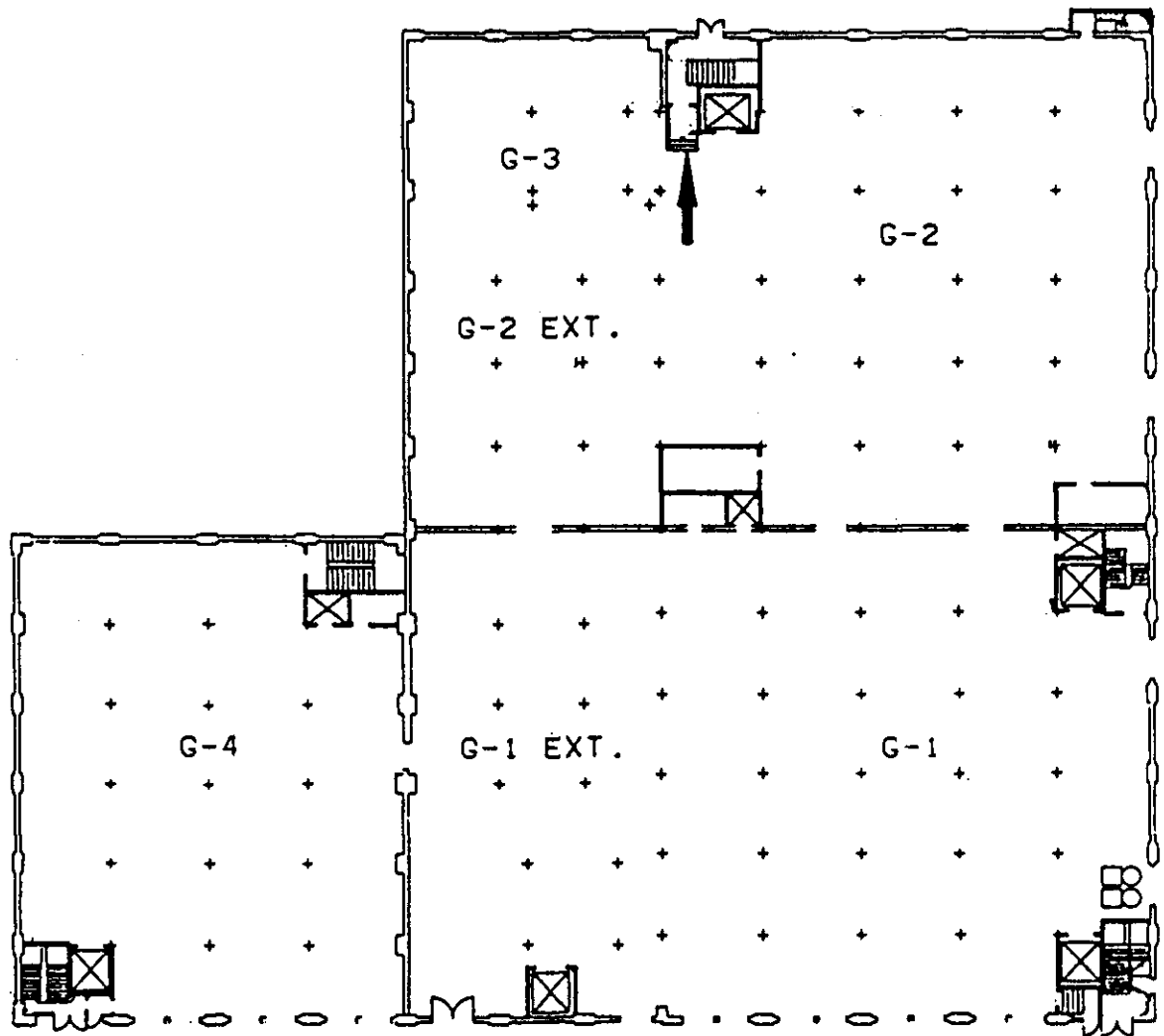


Figure 2. G BLOCK FIRST FLOOR PLAN

0 40 ft.